

The ESCAPE

A POST MARITAL ROMANCE
BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—The Escapade opens, not in the romance preceding the marriage of Ellen Slocum, a Puritan miss, and Lord Carrington of England, but in their life after settling in England. The scene is placed, just following the revolution, in Carrington castle in England. The Carringtons, after a house party, engaged in a family tilt, caused by jealousy.

CHAPTER II.—Lord Carrington and his wife each made charges of faithlessness against the other in continuation of the quarrel.

CHAPTER III.—First objecting against playing cards with the guests, Lady Carrington agreed to cut cards with Lord Strathgate, whose attentions to Ellen had become a sore point with Carrington. The loss of \$100.00 failed to perturb her, and her husband then cut for his wife's L. O. U. and his honor, Carrington winning. The incident closed except that a liking for each other apparently existed between Lady Carrington and Lord Strathgate.

CHAPTER IV.—Additional attention of Lord Carrington to Lady Cecily and Lord Strathgate to Lady Carrington compelled the latter to vow that she would leave the castle.

CHAPTER V.—Preparing to flee, Lady Carrington and her chum Deborah, an American girl, met Lord Strathgate at two a. m., he agreeing to see them safely away.

CHAPTER VI.—Ellen fled, Strathgate driving. He attempted to take her to his castle, but she left him stunned in the road when the carriage meets with an accident. She and Debbie then struck out for Portsmouth, where she intended to sail for America.

CHAPTER VII.—Hearings of Ellen's flight. Lord Carrington set out in pursuit.

CHAPTER VIII.—Seton, locating a fishing village, hit the trail of Ellen and Debbie. He then rented a fast vessel and started in pursuit, Carrington pursuing Strathgate.

CHAPTER IX.—Strathgate, bleeding from a fall, fished out to Portsmouth, for which Carrington, Ellen and Seton were also headed by different routes.

CHAPTER X.—Strathgate arrived in Portsmouth in advance of the others, finding that Ellen's ship had sailed before her.

CHAPTER XI.—Strathgate and Carrington each hired a small yacht to pursue the wrong vessel, upon which each supposed Ellen had sailed.

CHAPTER XII.—Seton overtook the fugitives near Portsmouth, but his craft ran aground, just as capture was imminent.

CHAPTER XIII.—Ellen won the chase by boarding American vessel and foiling her pursuers—Strathgate, Seton and Carrington. Carrington and Strathgate, thrown together by former's wrecking of latter's vessel, engaged in an impromptu duel, neither being hurt.

CHAPTER XIV.—Admiral Kephart Joins the Pursuit.

We left Sir Charles Seton hard and fast in his boat on the shoal. Sir Charles had nothing to do but study the ocean and observe that which transpired upon it, for a few moments of hard work convinced worthy Master Whibley that only the rising tide would float his vessel. Sir Charles saw the whole drama enacted before him. He saw Ellen run down the Flying Star; he saw that vessel's way checked; he could see Deborah followed by Ellen clamber aboard. He marked the other two boats chasing down the channel and made a shrewd guess that one carried Carrington and the other Strathgate. He saw the collision, although of course he was too far away to know who was responsible or what was happening. He even saw the smoke from the two pistols which were discharged by the belligerents on the boat and after a time detected the report faintly, but other than that he knew nothing.

It was some time before the rising tide coupled with their own tremendous exertion got the boat off the shoal. Sir Charles had had plenty of time to mature his plans. He knew that Ellen was on that ship. He guessed that Carrington and Strathgate had gone back to Portsmouth, if one or the other, or both of them had not been killed in that interchange of pistol shots, and he surmised that the first duty to which they would devote themselves would be to see which one could kill the other.

He therefore determined to chase the ship. Not in his own boat, oh, no! He had a better plan than that. A ready and resourceful man was Sir Charles Seton. And while he was deeply in love with Mistress Debbie, the more in love because through Ellen's persistence his sweetheart had been, as it were, dragged out of his arms and therefore added the value of the unattainable to his pursuit of her, yet he was not in addition blinded by passion, jealousy and hatred as were Carrington and Strathgate. He knew that Mistress Debbie despised men of the Strathgate stamp, and although everything in petticoats was fair game for Strathgate, he also knew that the earl was on this occasion bent toward Lady Ellen. Therefore, he was in a saner and brighter mood than the other two.

Not far away lay the great ships of Admiral Kephart. The admiral had announced his intention of posting down to Portsmouth by coach. The first thing he would do when he arrived would be to board his flagship which lay at the head of the line of a dozen little ships several miles away from the place where Sir Charles had taken ground. Sir Charles had taken ground. Sir Charles reasoned that the admiral would be in a hurry to get to Portsmouth and that even if he did not press the post boys, he would probably have reached his ship by the time

Sir Charles could get there.

Therefore, he possessed his soul in such patience as he could until his own boat once more got under way. He had bidden Master Whibley to mark well the course of the merchantman upon which Ellen and Deborah



"I Am Sir Charles Seton."

had taken refuge. This ship headed steadily eastward and seemed to have settled down for a long voyage.

It took but a short time for Sir Charles to run alongside the Britannia. Bidding the men wait for him, he scrambled up the battens to the gangway and stepped aboard.

An officer met him at once.

"I am Sir Charles Seton," began the

soldier, "captain in the Sussex light

infantry."

"I am pleased to see you, sir," answered the officer, courteously, extending his hand. "I am Lieutenant Collier of the royal navy."

As Sir Charles shook the sailor's

hand he asked:

"Is Admiral Kephart on the ship?"

"Yes, sir. He came aboard a half an hour ago and went immediately to his cabin."

"May I see him?"

"I'll send your name in. Mr. Mort-

lake," said the officer, turning about.

A smart midshipman ran across the

deck and touched his cap.

"My compliments to Admiral Keph-

ard and say to him that Captain Sir

Charles Seton of the Sussex light in-

fantry desires the privilege of speech

with him."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the midship-

man, saluting again and scurrying aft.

"Might I ask you, Mr. Collier," said

Sir Charles, "if the Britannia is ready

for instant service?"

The lieutenant smiled.

"All his majesty's ships are ready

for service at any time."

"Yes, yes, I know, of course," re-

turned Seton, "but what I mean is,

could this ship be got under way at

once?"

"On the instant."

"And is she prepared for a cruise?"

"She could go around the world and

take her departure within an hour,"

returned the lieutenant with a pleased

sense of demonstrating the efficiency

of his majesty's navy beyond perad-

venture. "May I ask why you wish

to know?" he continued turning to

Sir Charles.

This was an embarrassing question,

but Sir Charles was saved the neces-

sity of answering, for the midshipman

came running to the quarterdeck once

more and saluted.

"Well," said the officer to the ex-

pectant boy.

"Admiral Kephart's compliments

to you, sir, and he begs you will escort

Captain Seton to his cabin at once."

"You're in luck, captain," returned

the officer, "the admiral is not always

so easy of access. Will you step this

way, sir?"

"After you, sir," said Sir Charles,

bowing and following the lieutenant

until he was ushered past the marines

orderly on duty and into the admi-

ral's cabin.

The admiral was just completing

his toilet. His body servant was help-

ing him on with his coat. He had

admiral. "How was that?"

Seton rapidly detailed the circum-

stances as he had deduced them.

"Well done, that woman has spirit

enough," continued the old soldier, "to

command a frigate. You will never

convince me that she's taken up with

a man of Strathgate's caliber."

"She went away with him, though,"

said Seton thoughtfully.

"Ay, ay, but she knows no more of

the world than a baby. She simply

made use of his proffered assistance

to escape from an intolerable situa-

tion. You take me, Seton?"

"I do, admiral, and I confess I hard-

ly blame her. How Carrington could

tolerate Lady Cecily for a moment

beside that splendid woman—"

"To say nothing of that other splen-

did woman, Mistress Deborah Slocum,

eh, Seton?"

"I admit, admiral—"

"Even 'Saints' Rest' becomes

heavenly when looked at by the aid

of such a pair of black eyes? And the

lady, boy?"

"I confess, sir," answered Seton,

somewhat abashed by the frank ques-

tioning of the old man, "that I have

some reason to believe, in short—"

"In short, my boy, you've been chas-

ing her all night, have you?"

"You're right, sir."

"And what now?"

"I told you, admiral, that I knew

where they were."

"Well, where are they? Out with

it, lad. Disclose your information and

come to the point. All these side

issues are unworthy of a soldier,"

laughed the old seaman, well knowing

that for most of them he was respon-

sible.

"They're on a merchant ship bound

up the channel and going fast when

I saw them last."

"What?" cried the admiral. "Give

me the particulars."

Sir Charles rapidly ran over the

scene of the morning.

The old admiral threw back his head

and laughed.

"And she outwitted you all, shook

Strathgate off the track, led you

ashore, watched Carrington and

Strathgate fight it out under her very

eyes and got clean away?"

"She hasn't got away yet, admiral."

"What mean you?"

"I came here to make a proposition

to you."

"A proposition to me?"

"Yes."

"You have a fast ship at your com-

mand, I take it."

"Do you mean the Britannia?" said

the admiral, mentioning his flagship.

"I do."

"Of course she's fast. The admiral-

ty know me. I wouldn't take a slow

ship."

"Is she as fast as that merchant-

man, do you think?"

"Why, my boy, there isn't a mer-

chant ship on the seas that she could-

n't overhaul in anything like a wind."

"Admiral," said Sir Charles in-

genuously, "I lay you a wager."

"What is that?"

"A hundred pounds that you can't

overtake that merchant ship."

"What!" roared the admiral. "Me

take out one of his majesty's ships to

chase after a runaway wife and a fool-

ish girl?"

"I beg your pardon, admiral, if you

refer to Mistress Deborah Slocum, I

must ask you to moderate your lan-

guage," protested Sir Charles, warmly,

his face flushing.

"Go to! go to!" laughed the admi-

ral. "I'm old enough to be your

father. But the idea of an admiral

of the white taking a hundred gun

ship-of-the-line out to chase a paltry

merchantman for—Impossible, my boy,

impossible!"

"But," said Sir Charles, "the navy

cannot afford to decline a bet, a wager

with its sister service. I'll lay you

a thousand pounds, admiral, that you

can't do it."

"My lad," said the admiral gently,

after a moment's reflection, "no wagers

are needed. I'll do it because I'm

his majesty's land forces. Seton, this

is the Honorable Archibald Beatty,

my flag captain. Beatty, will you get

the Britannia under way at once?"

"Yes, sir," returned the captain.

"Are the rest of the fleet to follow

us?"

"No," answered the admiral, "sig-

nal to the rest of them to disregard

the movements of the commander-in-

chief. Then signal to the Renown for

Lascelles to take command until we

return."

"Very good, sir," returned the cap-

tain. "And what course shall we lay?"

"That which will get us into the

channel quickest, and then as due

east as the wind will let us. I'll be on

deck, however, before you're ready for

that."

"There are several boat parties

ashore, admiral, do you wish me to

wait for them?"

"No, sir, you will weigh at once."

"That which will get us into the

channel quickest, and then as due

east as the wind will let us. I'll be on

deck, however, before you're ready for

that."

"And Beatty," the admiral called af-

ter him, "a drop of navy sherry with

me before you go."

"Thank you, admiral," said Beatty,

filling his glass.

"I'll give you a toast, Sir Charles,"

said the admiral.

"Yes," returned the soldier.

"A short cruise and the women at

the end of it!"

"I drink to that with all my heart!"

returned Sir Charles.

"And I also," said Captain Beatty,

greatly mystified, "although I don't

understand exactly."

"We're going to chase a Yankee

merchant ship, Beatty, and take a

couple of ladies in whom Sir Charles

is interested off of it."

"A couple!" cried Beatty.

"I'm only interested in one of them,"

said Sir Charles warmly.

"It's a runaway sweetheart and a

runaway wife, Beatty," continued the

admiral, "Lady Carrington and Mis-

tress Deborah Slocum."

"And which one is Sir Charles inter-

ested in?" asked the sailor, smiling.

"In Mistress Slocum, of course,"

laughed the admiral. "Now, captain,"

he continued, assuming his quarter-

deck manner, "I want you to get the

ship under way in the quickest pos-

sible time. Let's show this land

lubber here what his majesty's navy

can do when it's in dead earnest.

Imagine there are a dozen Frenchmen

out there, all boiling for a fight, and

bear a hand!"

"Ay, ay, sir," said Beatty, saluting

and withdrawing from the cabin.

A moment later there came faintly

through the bulkheads the shrill

whistling of the boatswain and his

mates, followed by a deep cry:

"All hands up anchor!"

CHAPTER XV.

Captain Jeremiah Tuggles is insulted.

It was a moment of splendid triumph for the heroine of this mad escapade when she drew under the lee of the great ship tremendously above her. Her eyes were as keen as Carrington's. She had recognized, or divined, that the tall figure standing on the rail of the larger boat staring at her was her husband. She knew that in some way they had concluded that she would try to escape on the merchantman and that they were trying to catch that ship. She was experienced enough, also, to know that their efforts